

CHAPTER 16

DECEDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The Navy's Decedent Affairs Program consists of search, recovery, identification, care, and disposition of remains of deceased personnel for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible. The Decedent Affairs Program is considered a highly visible and extremely sensitive program. Arrangements for the burial of the deceased should be conducted in an expedient but dignified manner, and survivors of the deceased should be given the greatest possible amount of support and assistance.

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Identify military activities that are responsible for the management of the Navy and Marine Corps Decedent Affairs Program.*

The overall manager of the Navy and Marine Corps Decedent Affairs Program is the Naval Office of Medical/Dental (MEDDEN) Affairs, located at Great Lakes, IL. At the local level, naval hospitals and other naval activities are responsible for inspecting remains, briefing escorts and making travel arrangements, and (for burial at sea) delivering remains to the point of embarkation. Naval hospitals manage deaths that occur at the hospital and in their local catchment (area of responsibility) area. At small independent operational units and on board naval vessels, the responsibility for managing the Decedent Affairs Program falls on the commanding officer or officer-in-charge and the senior Hospital Corpsman. For this reason, Hospital Corpsmen should have a working knowledge of decedent affairs procedures, which are outlined in NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1, *Decedent Affairs Manual*.

PROGRAMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall the purpose of the Current Death Program, Graves Registration Program, Concurrent Return Program, Return of Remains Program, and the Casualty Assistance Call Program.*

To carry out the various responsibilities of the Decedent Affairs Program, five programs have been established. They are

- the **Current Death Program**,
- the **Graves Registration Program**,
- the **Concurrent Return Program**,
- the **Return of Remains Program**, and
- the **Casualty Assistance Calls Program**.

CURRENT DEATH PROGRAM

The Current Death Program provides professional mortuary services, supplies, and related services incident to the care and disposition of remains of persons eligible for these services. Under this program, remains are shipped to a place designated by the primary next of kin (PNOK), such as a spouse or parents, for permanent disposition. The decedent's personal effects will also be shipped to the legal recipient. The Current Death Program is normally operational on a worldwide basis during peacetime, but may also be used during major conflicts.

GRAVES REGISTRATION PROGRAM

The Graves Registration Program (GR or GRREG) provides for the search, recovery, evacuation (to a temporary cemetery or a mortuary), initial identification, disposition of personal effects found with each deceased, and burial of deceased persons in temporary cemeteries. This program is only operational when authorized by the responsible commander during major military operations. When necessary, the GR program includes the establishment and maintenance of temporary burial sites. Detailed guidance on graves registration procedures are contained in the Navy and Marine Corps publication NAVMED P-5016/NAVMC 2509A, *Handling of Deceased Personnel in Theaters of Operation*.

CONCURRENT RETURN PROGRAM

The Concurrent Return Program combines the Current Death Program and Graves Registration

Program. This program provides for the search, recovery, and evacuation of remains to a processing point; identification and preparation of remains in a mortuary; and shipment, for permanent disposition, to a final destination designated by the PNOK. The Concurrent Return Program normally becomes operational when large numbers of military personnel are committed to a strategic area.

Remains buried in temporary cemeteries (under the GR program or in emergencies) will normally be disinterred and evacuated under the Concurrent Return Program if conditions and capabilities permit.

RETURN OF REMAINS PROGRAM

The Return of Remains Program provides for permanent disposition of remains of persons buried in temporary cemeteries who could not be evacuated under the Concurrent Return Program. The Return of Remains Program is activated only upon the enactment of special legislation. This special legislation may authorize the establishment of one or more permanent American cemeteries in the overseas area and may give PNOK the option of having the remains buried therein or shipped to another place of their choosing. When the Return of Remains Program becomes activated, the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), is responsible for advising field activities of its activation.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CALLS PROGRAM

The Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) is administered by the Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command (COMNAVMILPERSCOM), and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). Although integrally related, the CACP is not part of the Decedent Affairs Program. The CACP details a Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO), usually a commissioned officer (although senior enlisted personnel may be used), to personally contact the PNOK. The CACO helps the PNOK and SNOK (secondary next of kin—children over 18, brother, etc.) with problems surrounding the death, and provides information on such matters as

- disposition of remains,
- death gratuity and unpaid pay and allowances,
- personal effects of the deceased,

- settlement of the decedent's estate (wills, bank accounts, property, savings bonds, commercial insurance, etc.),
- Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI), and
- travel of dependents to grave site and to permanent residence.

The Navy and Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Calls Programs are operated differently. The individual service instructions noted below should be consulted for specifics.

- NAVPERS 15560, *Naval Military Personnel Manual* (MILPERSMAN)
- BUPERSINST 1770.3, *The Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) Manual*
- MCO P3040.4, *Marine Corps Casualty Procedures Manual* (MARCORCASPROC-MAN)

ELIGIBILITY FOR DECEDENT AFFAIRS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Identify individuals who are eligible for decedent affairs benefits.*

Navy and Marine Corps members who expire while serving on active duty or active and inactive duty for training are entitled to Decedent Affairs Program benefits. Generally, the following persons under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Navy are entitled to some decedent affair benefits: dependents, retirees, and civilian employees. For details, see NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1, *Decedent Affairs Manual*.

NOTIFICATION OF DEATH

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Identify forms used to report casualties, deaths, and personnel missing or missing in action.*

As soon as possible after it is determined that a casualty has occurred, submit a casualty report in accordance with MILPERSMAN 4210100. When death occurs, complete the "Personnel Casualty Report (Death), Report Symbol NMPC 1770-4

Officer/Enlisted.” For missing personnel, complete the “Personnel Casualty Report (Missing/Missing in action), Report Symbol NMPC 1770-4 Officer/Enlisted.”

PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORT

A personnel casualty report must be completed for the following persons who become casualties:

- Active duty Navy
- Retired Navy
- Certain former service members
- Certain military dependents
- Members of other Armed Forces
- Civilians serving with or attached to Navy commands
- Others whose deaths occur on naval reservations or aboard ships

When a member becomes a casualty, his commanding officer should submit a personnel casualty report. However, if a service member becomes a casualty while away from his command, the command or activity that learns of the casualty occurring should submit the personnel casualty report. The member’s command should supplement the personnel casualty report that was previously submitted by another command.

METHOD OF REPORTING CASUALTIES

Personnel casualty reports should be sent by priority message.

Action Addressees on Personnel Casualty Reports

The following activities should be action addressees on personnel casualty reports:

1. Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command
2. Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
3. Casualty Assistance Calls/Funeral Honors Support (CAC/FHS) Program coordinators of the area in which the primary and secondary NOK reside, or the appropriate overseas CAC/FHS program coordinator

4. The Naval Office of Medical/Dental (MEDDEN) Affairs

Information Addressees on Personnel Casualty Reports

The following activities should be listed as information addressees on personnel casualty reports:

1. Secretary of the Navy
2. Navy Finance Center
3. Navy Family Allowance Activity, Cleveland (if the member reported is in a missing status, or if the status is being changed from missing to deceased)
4. The CAC/FHS program coordinator of the area in which the casualty occurred
5. The Chief of Naval Operations (if the casualty is incidental to operations, and on all reports of progress in searches for missing members)
6. The appropriate home port/station, type commander, appropriate operational and administrative commands, and the Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC)
7. The command or activity designated by the CAC/FHS program coordinator to provide casualty assistance
8. The Fleet Home Town News Center
9. The Naval Safety Center
10. The Judge Advocate General
11. The Appropriate Naval Legal Service Office (if the casualty is the result of other than natural causes)
12. The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

If the decedent was a Marine Corps member, follow the notification procedures and message formats contained in the MARCORCASPROC MAN, MCO P3040.4.

NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall notification of next of kin procedures.*

In cases of death, primary next of kin are personally notified by a uniformed Navy or Marine

Corps representative, as appropriate. Personal notification of the PNOK will normally be made between 0600 and 2200, except under unusual circumstances (e.g., the new media is expected to make a press release; or the member has been hospitalized in serious or very serious condition within CONUS, and the NOK is already aware of the prognosis).

When a death occurs within CONUS, it is the responsibility of the member's commanding officer to make sure that personal notification is made. Outside CONUS, the COMNAVMILPERSCOM will make sure that personal notification is made through the appropriate senior commander overseas.

CONFIRMATION OF THE CASUALTY

Notifications that are not made by telegram should be confirmed by a telegram, unless the PNOK or SNOK has specifically stated that written confirmation is not desired. This follow-up notification should take place within 24 hours of the personal notification.

See MILPERSMAN 4210100 for examples of basic telegram formats for notification and confirmation of death. The formats are presented for guidance only, and rigid adherence is not required.

CONDOLENCE LETTER

Commanding officers are required to write a letter to the appropriate NOK within 48 hours of a casualty. The letter, in addition to expressions of condolence, should contain appropriate details of the casualty; however, no details should be included that are likely to distress the NOK. A copy of the letter is sent to the COMNAVMILPERSCOM and Office of the Judge Advocate General (OJAG)—Investigations Division. Example formats for condolence letters can be found in the *Decedent Affairs Manual*.

AUTOPSY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Determine under what circumstances an autopsy should be performed.*

An autopsy will be performed on the remains of all persons who die on active duty or active duty for training when the commanding officer (CO) deems it necessary. The CO's request may be self-initiated or

based upon the recommendation of an investigating officer, other fact-finding body, or a medical officer. An autopsy may be necessary to determine the true cause of death, to get information for completing military records, or to protect the welfare of the military community.

AIRCREW AUTOPSY

The *Manual of the Medical Department* (MANMED), NAVMED P-117, states that when an aircrew member dies while serving as an aircrew member on a military aircraft, the medical officer will recommend to the CO that an autopsy be performed to determine the cause of death. The cause of death in these cases is interpreted to mean any correlation between pathological evidence and the accident cause factor.

REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR AUTOPSY

When an autopsy is desired but not mandatory, the following sentence will be incorporated in the casualty notification message that requests disposition instructions from the PNOK:

“In the interest of medical science and to confirm medical diagnosis, it is requested that your telegram include whether or not permission is granted to accomplish mortem examination.”

NONMILITARY AND RETIRED PERSONNEL AUTOPSY

When an autopsy is deemed necessary for retired personnel or nonmilitary persons who die at a naval treatment facility or on a Navy installation, written authorization from the NOK must be obtained before performing the autopsy. The request for permission to perform an autopsy should be incorporated in the casualty notification message, as noted above.

SEARCH, RECOVERY, AND IDENTIFICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall procedures used to search for, recover, and identify remains.*

The search for, recovery, and identification of remains should be accomplished as soon as possible

and should be coordinated with an administrative fact-finding body. Normally, the need for these operations results from acts of violence, such as an aircraft accident, fire, explosion, or natural disaster. The *Manual of the Judge Advocate General* (JAGMAN), JAGINST 5800.7, requires the convening of an administrative fact-finding body when incidents of this nature occur. This responsibility is usually delegated to a naval activity with necessary capabilities at or near the scene of disaster. In establishing identification of remains, search and recovery operations are part of the fact-finding body's functions, with technical assistance furnished by appropriate medical authorities.

SEARCH AND RECOVERY

Every effort should be made to recover all remains. In disasters such as aircraft accidents, fires, explosions, etc., involving the death of naval members and members of other services, notify the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) and MEDDEN Affairs by priority message. This assures immediate interdepartmental cooperation and the early dispatch of necessary supplies, equipment, medical and dental records, and technical personnel. The priority message should include the following information:

- Name, grade or rate, and social security number of all personnel believed dead or missing
- Names of those personnel already identified and method of identification
- Names of those personnel tentatively already positively identified, and whether remains are anatomically intact
- Type and quantity of mortuary supplies, transfer cases, chemicals, and other equipment required
- Whether technical help is desired

Do not release information to the NOK, family, or news media unless specific instructions are received from BUMED and MEDDEN Affairs to do so.

When search, recovery, and identification operations continue for more than 36 hours, chronological progress reports should be dispatched every 24 hours to BUMED and MEDDEN Affairs, with the appropriate information addressees directed by NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.

IDENTIFICATION

When the CO is satisfied that identification has been established beyond doubt and documented accordingly, the remains may be considered identified. A minimum of two statements of recognition, substantiated by dental and/or fingerprint comparison or intact remains, will substantiate identification requirements.

MEDDEN Affairs will establish final conclusions and take action required for final disposition of these remains if shipped from outside CONUS to CONUS. Disposition of unidentified remains will be directed by the MEDDEN Affairs or the CMC, as appropriate.

After thorough study of all evidence, final conclusions made by MEDDEN Affairs will result in one of the following determinations:

- Identification of the remains
- Unidentified, but believed to be a specific individual
- Unidentified, unknown
- Group remains, known individuals
- Group remains, unknown individuals

When an autopsy of remains is required or requested, the identification specialist should schedule the autopsy to be performed during the identification process or immediately following. This will preclude any delays in releasing the body for burial and make sure that methods of identification are included in the autopsy report.

Personal effects found on or with remains, after having served all identification purposes, will be disposed of in accordance with current instructions contained in the *Naval Supply Manual*, NAVSUP P-485, or the MARCORCASPROC MAN, MCO P3040.4, as appropriate.

IDENTIFICATION PROBLEMS

All remains, except those that have been positively identified and are anatomically complete, will require additional study and processing by an identification specialist. The MEDDEN Affairs may be requested to provide an identification specialist to visit the activity and make a complete review, to assure that all possible techniques, methods, and procedures have been used to provide a positive identification. The CMC should be an information addressee when members of the Marine Corps may be involved. When members of

other services are involved, BUMED and MEDDEN Affairs should be notified by priority message to ensure immediate interdepartmental coordination.

PROCURING MORTUARY SERVICES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall mortuary services procurement methods, and recognize primary and secondary burial expenses.*

Mortuary services for the remains of individuals eligible for Decedent Affairs Program benefits outside CONUS are specified in local instructions. Mortuary services within CONUS are provided by naval activities through annual contracts, individual purchase orders, or by private arrangements.

ANNUAL CONTRACTS

Annual contracts are awarded to funeral directors serving the local area of activities anticipating 10 or more deaths per year.

ONE-TIME CONTRACTS

One-time contracts (individual purchase orders) are issued by an activity to a funeral home when an annual contract is not in effect.

PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS

Private arrangements are made by the PNOK. The PNOK should be advised of services and supplies available through Navy sources and on reimbursement limitations. Reimbursement limitations and reimbursement forms can be obtained by contacting MEDDEN Affairs or the local naval hospital's Decedent Affairs Office.

AUTHORIZED SERVICES

Annual contracts and one-time contracts cover primary funeral expenses but do not include secondary expenses. NOK should be tactfully encouraged to allow the Navy to make all primary-care arrangements, since greater benefits can be furnished throughout procedures. For more information concerning procedures and authorized items, consult NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1. Primary and secondary funeral expenses are explained in the following sections.

Primary Expenses

Primary expenses are expenses incurred in connection with the recovery, preparation, encasement, and burial of the remains. Primary expenses include

- expenses incurred in the recovery and removal of remains,
- embalment,
- casket and shipping case,
- cremation,
- interment,
- clothing (e.g., military uniform), and
- delivery of the remains to a common carrier terminal, a local cemetery, or crematorium.

Secondary Expenses

Secondary expenses are expenses incurred in connection with the funeral and burial of remains. Secondary expenses include

- funeral coach,
- transportation of relatives to the cemetery,
- gravesite,
- vault,
- funeral director's services,
- clergyman's services,
- opening and closing the grave,
- floral tribute, and
- obituary notices.

PREPARATION AND PROCESSING REMAINS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall procedures for preparing and processing remains.*

It is imperative that preservative treatment be initiated as soon as possible after death. The naval authority with decedent affairs responsibility should maintain close coordination with appropriate military or civilian authorities to ensure the prompt release and

delivery of remains to the mortuary facility. Remains must be prepared under approved high standards of the mortuary profession and returned to the final destination in their most normal and lifelike appearance.

INITIAL PREPARATION

Remains may be refrigerated for short periods pending arrival of a transportation vessel or arrival of the government embalmer. To minimize cellular deterioration, remains should be refrigerated above the freezing point at 36° to 40°F (2.2° to 4.4°C).

OVERSEAS FACILITIES

Government mortuary facilities are located in various overseas areas and have the responsibility to furnish mortuary services for all eligible categories of military and civilian personnel. The geographical areas of responsibility are outlined in the CINCPACINST 5360.1, *Geographic Responsibilities for Mortuary Operations*. Also consult NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1 for locations of overseas mortuaries.

When death occurs in overseas areas not served by facilities listed in NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1, request assistance from the senior naval command. In some areas, Department of State sources may have the capability to render advice or assistance. The senior naval command may also be able to arrange airlift of remains from the place of death to a point where a government mortuary or a commercial facility is available, or arrange for emergency dispatch of a qualified embalmer from an overseas government mortuary to the place of death.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH (OVERSEAS)

When remains are transferred from an overseas activity to a CONUS point of entry, three signed copies of DD Form 2064, *Certificate of Death (Overseas)*, must accompany the remains. Failure to include the DD Form 2064 may cause delays in providing further transfer within CONUS. Additionally, at least two DD Form 565, *Statement of Recognition*, should be included.

BURIAL CLOTHING

The service dress blue uniform or (if this uniform is not available for deceased personnel) the appropriate winter service dress uniform, with authorized insignia,

devices, badges, decorations, underwear, and hose are the only approved items for burial, unless other items are specifically requested by the NOK. Shoes and headgear should also be procured when required or requested. These items may be withdrawn from the deceased's personal effects or purchased from the Navy Exchange, Navy Retail Clothing Store, or Marine Corps Clothing Store. When not available through these sources, procurement through commercial sources is authorized. When suitable items are not available for personnel who die outside the 48 contiguous United States, the U.S. port of entry should be contacted and given estimated uniform sizes, as soon as possible, so burial clothing can be purchased. Funding for uniform items is noted in NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.

When requested by the NOK, remains may be attired in a white uniform or civilian clothing consisting of appropriate outer clothing, underwear, hose, and, if specifically requested, shoes. Items of clothing in the individual's possession at the time of death should be used if available and in satisfactory condition.

PLACEMENT OF REMAINS IN CASKET OR TRANSFER CASE

Normally, remains are placed in a specification casket or transfer case in a manner that will create an appearance of rest and composure. Precautions should be taken to ensure maintenance of position during transit.

Each remains returned in a transfer case will be wrapped in a white cotton sheet plus a second wrapping in a polyethylene cover, and sealed with pressure-sensitive tape or heat sealed.

CASKETS

There are two sizes of caskets. Each is an 18-gauge silvertone metal sealer with a cut top. The standard size casket has internal dimensions of 23 x 78 inches (58.4 cm x 1.98 m), while the oversize casket has internal dimensions of 25 x 81 inches (63.5 cm x 2.06 m).

INSPECTION OF REMAINS

After processing or reprocessing and before shipment, all remains should be inspected in accordance with NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1. The decedent affairs officer (DAO) is responsible for

expediting arrangements for transportation. As such, personnel should be available at all times, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, to perform inspections. Before acceptance, the inspector must make sure that all services and supplies meet current specifications.

CREMATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall guidelines for requesting cremation of remains.*

When requested in writing or by telegram, cremation is authorized, subject to compliance with civil regulations. No overt action by naval authorities should be made to encourage the NOK to elect cremation. Cremation will not be permitted if any questions exists concerning an individual's legal right to direct disposition of the remains.

AT-SEA DISPOSITION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall burial-at-sea procedures.*

Commanding officers who receive requests for at-sea disposition of remains or cremains (cremated remains) will forward the request to the appropriate fleet commander-in-chief (CINC) and requested port of embarkation. Fleet CINCs are authorized to designate activities to accept remains or cremains on a "not-to-interfere basis." The port of embarkation will coordinate the arrangements. Upon receipt of authorization, the date of committal or dispersion will be determined by the availability of resources. Except under unusual circumstances, civilian personnel will not be authorized to attend services aboard naval ships at sea or aboard naval aircraft. Exceptions that cannot be resolved at the delegated authority level will be referred to the CNO for final determination. Refer to NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1 for eligibility and specifics.

PUTREFIED REMAINS

When the mortician is unable to arrest the odor of remains, they will not be accepted for burial at sea. The odor generated for such remains will detract from the

dignity of the ceremony and will have a detrimental effect on the officers and men of the vessel. Cremated putrefied remains may be accepted.

CEREMONY RECORDS

Since civilians are not normally allowed to attend ceremonies aboard naval ships or aircrafts, photographs and/or video of the ceremony will be taken. Both a letter describing the ceremony and the burial flag will be sent to the NOK, in accordance with NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.

CONSIGNMENT AND TRANSPORTATION OF REMAINS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall consignment policies and authorized methods of transportation of remains.*

Activities that arrange transportation have the responsibility to provide expeditious transportation and a confirmed schedule as soon as possible by whatever methods meet the requirements. Consideration should be given to any special desires of the NOK, including releasing the remains for transportation that they may wish to provide.

CONSIGNMENT

Remains may only be consigned to a funeral director, the director or superintendent of a national cemetery, or the consignee designated by the MEDDEN Affairs for unclaimed remains. In addition to the above consignees, cremains may be consigned to the PNOK or person designated by the PNOK.

AUTHORIZED METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Authorized methods of transportation within the United States include government air, commercial air, chartered air taxi, and funeral coach.

Government Air

Government air **is not** authorized within CONUS without approval of the CNO (OP-414). If the circumstances indicate government air, MEDDEN

Affairs should be contacted for guidance and assistance.

Commercial Air

Commercial air may be supplemented by either rail or funeral coach transportation. An escort must travel with the remains. If delays en route or changes in schedule occur, the escort must notify the installation arranging the transportation and the consignee.

Chartered Air Taxi

Chartered air taxi service may be authorized when commercial air is not available to the destination and the use of a funeral vehicle or rail would cause undue delay.

Funeral Coach

The funeral coach method of transportation may be used under any of the following circumstances:

- To transfer remains from the place of preparation to another local funeral home, to a local cemetery, or to a common-carrier terminal
- When common-carrier service is not available
- When a common carrier is available only part of the way to the place designated by the PNOK, then funeral coach service may be used for the remaining portion of the transportation authorized
- When the cost is not in excess of the common-carrier cost
- When the cemetery cannot provide transportation from the terminal to the cemetery, a funeral coach may be used as a continuation of common-carrier service when remains are consigned directly to a national cemetery or a Navy cemetery or plot
- To transfer remains from the common-carrier terminal at destination to the funeral establishment, and to deliver remains to the local cemetery or crematory
- When requested by the NOK, and the family member defrays costs in excess of the method that would have been used by the government
- When the use of a common-carrier service will involve extended layover, and this method will expedite the arrival

TRANSPORTATION OF CREMATED REMAINS

Cremated remains (cremains) of active duty personnel will be hand carried by an escort, and transported using commercial air, rail, a funeral director's vehicle, or other appropriate vehicle. When an escort is not authorized, cremains may be transported by registered mail (preferred method), air, or surface transportation to the PNOK, or to a specified individual designated by the PNOK.

TRANSPORTATION OF REMAINS OF CONTAGIOUS OR COMMUNICABLE DISEASE VICTIMS

When death is the result of a contagious or communicable disease, remains, after embalming, should be placed immediately in a transfer case or casket. The transfer case or casket should be closed immediately and a gummed 2" x 4" label, marked "CONTAGIOUS" should be affixed to the outside of the receptacle at the head end. Information concerning diseases considered contagious may be obtained from local or state health officials. When the remains carry communicable or contagious disease, make sure that the consignment message specifically states that death was due to a contagious or communicable disease.

AUTHORIZED TRANSPORTATION TO OR FROM CONUS

Remains of eligible decedents who die outside the 48 contiguous United States will be transported by the most expeditious U.S. government means; normally, government air (Air Mobility Command (AMC) flights) are used. If such transportation is not available, impractical, or would cause undue delay, commercial air may be authorized by MEDDEN Affairs.

OUTSIDE CONUS DESTINATIONS

When persons eligible for decedent affairs benefits are consigned to a destination outside the 48 contiguous United States, the activity responsible for preparation and transportation will contact the nearest consul of the country concerned to ascertain the requirements for entry, and assure that all requirements are met before arranging transportation of the remains. Failure to do so could lead to serious delays. Three certified copies of the civilian certificate of death should accompany the remains.

ESCORTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall criteria for escort selection, and identify escort duties and responsibilities.*

Escorts are provided to accompany remains to ensure prompt, safe delivery, as a mark of respect to the decedent, and as an indication of the Navy's desire to help the NOK. Only one escort is authorized. More than one may be assigned; however, two escorts may not serve at the same time. Problems concerning arrangements for a Navy escort that cannot be resolved by the responsible command should be referred to MEDDEN Affairs or the area commander outside CONUS. Problems concerning Marine Corps members should be referred to CMC.

INSIDE CONUS ESCORTS

Within CONUS, escorts are detailed to accompany the remains or cremains of each Navy and Marine Corps decedent to their final destination. Furnishing escorts is the responsibility of the activity arranging transportation of the remains or cremains. When selecting an escort for the deceased, the activity arranging transportation is encouraged to consult the last duty station of the deceased.

OUTSIDE CONUS ESCORTS

When remains are consigned to a place outside CONUS where Armed Forces representatives or other government officials are not available to receive, transfer, or otherwise assist in transportation arrangements, military escorts will be provided.

Unless a special escort is requested by the PNOK and approved by MEDDEN Affairs, remains transported by AMC aircraft from a point outside CONUS to a CONUS port of entry will not be accompanied by an escort. The aircraft commander will act as the escort during the time of transport by AMC aircraft. An escort will be detailed by the military activity responsible for transportation arrangements at the CONUS port of entry.

SELECTION OF ESCORTS

Any Navy or Marine Corps member on active duty may serve as an escort. Navy and Marine Corps members who volunteer may be accepted if they meet the criteria for selection. Unless a special escort is

requested by the NOK, the escort selected should be of the same branch of service, status, and paygrade of the deceased. The escort should be a friend of the deceased, from the same unit, and preferably of the same religion.

SPECIAL ESCORTS

A special escort is defined as a person requested specifically by the PNOK or by his representative, or a person assigned by an appropriate command because unusual circumstances prevail and such assignment is considered in the best interest of the naval service. All requests for special escorts must be referred to MEDDEN Affairs.

If desired by the PNOK, a civilian or member of another service may be assigned as a special escort. An escort in retired or inactive status should be treated as a civilian. All military special escorts are assigned subject to availability as determined by their CO and, unless closely related to the deceased, generally are not authorized outside CONUS.

DUTIES OF THE ESCORT

A naval escort is a representative of the Navy who will be required to perform services of a very special and personal nature. It is very important that these duties are thoroughly explained to the escort. Providing instructions to the escort is the responsibility of the command arranging for transportation of the remains. The *Manual for Escorts of Deceased Naval Personnel*, NAVPERS 15955, will assist in this function. For additional information, you should consult NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.

DISPOSITION OF PERSONAL EFFECTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall disposition of personal effects policies.*

All personal effects of the deceased are to be collected and inventoried, except where the member occupied government or public housing and the spouse requires no assistance. In the event the spouse dies simultaneously with the service member, the CO cooperates with surviving relatives of the deceased and civil authorities by providing protection for the property of the deceased.

The CO appoints an inventory board consisting of two members, of which one member is normally a

commissioned officer. The inventory should be recorded on an Inventory of Personal Effects Form, NAVSUP Form 29. An original and four copies will be prepared and signed by the board members. The board will send all five copies with the personal effects to the supply officer for completion, disposition, and signature. The supply officer returns three signed copies. The inventory board sends one copy to the COMNAVMILPERSCOM, files one in the service record of the deceased, and sends one to the officer who appointed the board.

CIVIL CERTIFICATES OF DEATH

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Determine when civil certificates are required and where they should be distributed.*

A civil certificate of death must be obtained if a death occurs within one of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. If a death occurs outside these areas, with the exception of Guam, a *Certificate of Death (Overseas)*, DD 2064, should be prepared. This certificate is in addition to the civil certificate of death; however, the civil certificate of death is not required in all overseas areas. Civil authorities should be consulted to determine local requirements. When a death occurs at a naval activity in any state, territory, or insular possession of the United States, the CO will report the death to civil authorities (usually the coroner or medical examiner). It is a general practice for medical officers to complete a civil certificate of death for all deaths occurring in naval medical treatment facilities.

The medical officer or Medical Department representative of the ship or station where the deceased was attached will obtain the certificate from the civil authorities. If requested by the authorities, the civil certificate of death may be prepared and signed by a naval officer. If problems arise in getting a certificate, request assistance from MEDDEN Affairs. If death occurs abroad and no naval activity is available, the nearest consular officer should be requested to get a certificate. The medical officer or Medical Department representative will prepare and forward a DD 2064 with the civil certificate of death, supporting papers, and the closed health record.

In general (except where the state has retained concurrent jurisdiction with the United States, civil authorities have no jurisdiction over deaths occurring

on naval reservations. However, a transit or burial permit should be obtained from civil authorities to remove the remains from a naval reservation either for shipment or burial. If death of any person for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible occurs outside the limits of a naval reservation, the remains normally will not be moved until permission has been received from civil authorities.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR DEATHS OCCURRING IN CONUS

When a Navy or Marine Corps death occurs in one of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, follow local civil requirements. In addition, the following procedures in table 16-1 apply:

DISTRIBUTION OF DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR DEATHS OCCURRING OUTSIDE CONUS

When a Navy or Marine Corps death occurs outside the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, follow the local civil requirements. In

Table 16-1.—Distribution of Death Certificate for Deaths Occurring in CONUS

For CONUS decedents. . .	Send copy of death certificate to. . .
Active Duty	Commanding Officer Naval Medical Information Management Center Bethesda, MD 20814 <i>(Place one copy in member's closed health record.)</i>
Inactive Duty	Naval Reserve Personnel Center 4400 Dauphine Street New Orleans, LA 70149
Active/Inactive Marines	Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code MSPA-1) Department of the Navy Washington, DC 20380

addition, a DD 2064 is prepared and copies are distributed as outlined in table 16-2.

DEATH CERTIFICATES FOR SHIPMENT OF REMAINS

When death occurs outside CONUS, three signed copies of DD 2064 will accompany the remains to CONUS. When death occurs within CONUS, three certified copies of the civil certificate of death will accompany the remains from CONUS to outside CONUS, in addition to all other forms required by NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.

NOTE: A certificate of death should not be prepared for persons listed as missing.

Table 16-2.—Distribution of Death Certificate for Deaths Occurring in Outside CONUS

For OUTUS decedents. . .	Send copy of death certificate to. . .
Active Duty	Commanding Officer Naval Medical Information Management Center Bethesda, MD 20814 <i>(The original death certificate is placed in member's closed health record.)</i>
Inactive Duty	<i>Navy personnel:</i> Naval Reserve Personnel Center 4400 Dauphine Street New Orleans, LA 70149 <i>Marine Corps personnel:</i> Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code MSPA-1) Department of the Navy Washington, DC 20380
Other deaths	The command indicated if the death occurred aboard a ship, at a naval station, or on a naval aircraft. For full details, see MANMED.

PAYMENTS AND COLLECTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall funeral payment and collection procedures.*

Authorized Decedent Affairs Program expenses are chargeable to the special open allotment held by BUMED. In circumstances involving reimbursable transactions, costs may also be initially charged to the open allotment subject to reimbursement. The allotment may be charged by any Navy or Marine Corps activity assigned procurement or payment responsibility. Army and Air Force activities may charge the allotment when arranging for authorized supplies and services at the request of a naval activity.

PRIMARY EXPENSES

If the NOK makes arrangements for disposition of remains, rather than using services of DoD, or completes funeral arrangements before DoD services are offered, the amounts outlined below are allowed toward incurred expenses. The figures quoted are subject to change, so check the latest series of NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1 for the authorized allowances, or contact the MEDDEN Affairs.

When an Armed Forces contract or mortuary is available (and services were offered to the NOK) but not used, an amount not to exceed what procurement would have cost the Navy is allowed. This includes costs the Navy would have incurred over and above contract expenses. Contact MEDDEN Affairs for current allowance limits.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

If the NOK arranges for transportation of remains, reimbursement may be made in an amount not to exceed what transportation would have cost the government. If the Navy has arranged for transportation and the final destination cannot be reached by common carrier, reasonable costs may be allowed for supplemental transportation by funeral coach or other vehicle.

SECONDARY (INTERMENT) EXPENSES

Secondary expenses will be provided to the NOK whether the remains or cremains are interred in a private cemetery, a national or federal government cemetery, or in a burial at sea. The allowance paid for each method of interment will be in accordance with

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR NONRECOVERABLE REMAINS

When remains of eligible military personnel, whose determination of death has been made, are nonrecoverable, reimbursement to the PNOK (or designee) may be made for memorial service expenditures. A claim for reimbursement may be allowed if presented within the approved time frame after notification of the NOK of the date of death. The PNOK must submit receipted invoices or a certified claim to MEDDEN Affairs.

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

Personnel serving on active duty at the time of their death are eligible for a headstone or marker provided by the Veterans' Administration (VA). At a national cemetery, the director or superintendent will make the arrangements. In naval plots and cemeteries, the Navy will make the arrangements. In other cemeteries, an application should be submitted to the VA. If a commercial headstone or marker is procured, a limited reimbursement is authorized. A memorial marker may be provided upon request to commemorate the death of a member whose remains were not recovered or were buried at sea.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall procedures for reimbursement of funeral costs.*

When the Navy has arranged for primary services and transportation, a claim for payment of the supplemental transportation charges may be submitted to MEDDEN Affairs by the funeral director at the final destination.

DD Form 1375, *Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses*, should be given to the PNOK (or PNOK's designee) to claim reimbursement or payment for primary expenses, transportation, and secondary expenses.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES NOT UTILIZED WITHIN CONUS

Claims relating to primary expenses and transportation costs to a common-carrier terminal for transportation to the final destination will be forwarded to MEDDEN Affairs.

Claims relating to interment (secondary) allowances and supplemental transportation costs will be forwarded to MEDDEN Affairs.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES NOT UTILIZED OUTSIDE CONUS

Area commanders outside CONUS are authorized to make local payment of expenses incurred in areas under their jurisdiction.

Claims in areas outside the jurisdiction of the activities (area commanders) noted in NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1 should be submitted to BUMED for resolution.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES UTILIZED

When the Navy has arranged for primary services and transportation, submit claims for payment and reimbursement of interment costs or supplemental transportation expenses to MEDDEN Affairs.

REPORTING EXPENSES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall reporting procedures for funeral expenses.*

Activities incurring expenses in connection with disposition of remains of Navy and Marine Corps personnel do not report these expenses to BUMED except when indicated on the DD Form 2062, *Record of Preparation and Disposition of Remains (Outside CONUS)*, and DD Form 2063, *Record of Preparation and Disposition of Remains (Within CONUS)*. In arranging for disposition of remains of other services' deceased personnel, activities obtaining services and supplies from commercial sources should forward a letter report, MED 5360-3, *Report of Disposition and Expenditures-Remains of the Dead*, to the service concerned. Costs for which the activity's funds have been cited should be shown on the letter report.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall services that are available at national cemeteries.*

Except for Arlington National Cemetery (which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army) and a few other exceptions noted in NAVMEDCOM-INST 5360.1, national cemeteries are under the jurisdiction of the Chief Memorial Affairs Director, Department of Memorial Affairs, Veterans' Administration, Washington, DC.

NATIONAL CEMETERY CLASSIFICATIONS

There are three classifications of national cemeteries:

1. **Open (Active)**—Cemeteries with grave spaces available.
2. **Closed (Inactive)**—Cemeteries without grave spaces available.
3. **New (Inactive)**—Cemeteries planned but not yet opened.

ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERMENT

Remains of the following naval and former naval members may be buried in any open national cemetery except at the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia:

- Navy or Marine Corps member who was serving on active duty at time of death (other than active duty for training).
- Former Navy or Marine Corps members who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Any member of a Navy or Marine Corps Reserve organization whose death occurred under honorable conditions while the individual was
 1. On active duty for training (including authorized travel to and from active duty training),
 2. on inactive duty training (including authorized travel to and from such training), or
 3. hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the government for injury or disease incurred or contracted during the period covered by 1 and 2, above.

- Members of the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps whose death occurred under honorable conditions while they were

1. attending an authorized training camp or authorized training cruise,
2. performing authorized travel to and from that camp or cruise, or
3. hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the government of the United States for injury or disease incurred or contracted during the period covered by 1 and 2, above.

- Surviving spouse and minor children of individuals covered above.

(For further information on interment eligibility at Arlington, consult NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1.)

At the discretion of the Chief Memorial Affairs Director, unmarried adult children of eligible individuals may be buried in any open national cemetery (except Arlington) if they were totally disabled either physically or mentally before attaining the age of 21. The Chief Memorial Affairs Director may also authorize the burial of unremarried widows or widowers or eligible deceased members whose remains were either lost at sea or buried at sea not at their own volition, or who were officially determined missing or missing in action and subsequently administratively declared dead for the purpose of terminating missing or missing-in-action status.

HONORS

Military honors for interment in national cemeteries are the responsibility of the member's service. Honors for services at Arlington National Cemetery are coordinated by the superintendent of the cemetery with BUPERS or the CMC, as appropriate.

VAULTS

A metal, asphalt, or concrete vault may be procured at the NOK's expense, if it is preferred. If a vault is privately procured, the superintendent/director must be notified of the outside dimensions to ensure the proper preparation of the grave. The contractor furnishing the vault must also provide necessary equipment and personnel for placing the vault in the grave before the funeral service and for placement of the vault lid after the service.

VIEWING REMAINS

National cemeteries no longer have facilities for viewing remains. If the NOK desires a viewing before interment, the remains must be consigned to a local funeral director.

SCHEDULING

Unless extraordinary circumstances exist with respect to the condition of remains, interment in national cemeteries will not be made on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays.

NAVAL PLOTS AND CEMETERIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall policy for interment at a naval cemetery.*

With two exceptions, MEDDEN Affairs exercises technical direction of naval plots and cemeteries. Presently, there are only a few active naval cemeteries, so plot availability is extremely limited. For this reason, decedents who are eligible for interment in national cemeteries will not normally be authorized interment in a naval plot or cemetery. However, exceptional or unusual circumstances will be referred to BUMED for determination.

GROUP INTERMENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Recall guidelines for group interments.*

When remains of two or more individuals killed in the same incident cannot be individually identified, a priority message detailing the circumstances should be sent to MEDDEN Affairs. MEDDEN Affairs will then determine if there is a need for an identification specialist to be sent. If remains cannot be individually identified, the collective remains will be interred as a group interment. Group interments should be made in a national cemetery, within the 50 United States, as

close to the midpoint of the two most widely separated homes of record of known deceased individuals involved, or as otherwise directed by the program managers. MEDDEN Affairs will coordinate with the other services as required. Procedures followed in group interments are:

1. Unidentified remains should be prepared, wrapped and placed into the minimum number of caskets possible without overcrowding. Partially segregated but identifiable remains should be wrapped separately.
2. One or more escorts should be provided, as long as the number of escorts does not exceed the number of deceased persons.
3. The PNOK and two blood relatives of each deceased member in a group interment are authorized round-trip transportation to the place of interment at government expense.
4. The ceremonies should be conducted with full military honors and be in accordance with the religious preferences applicable to all denominations represented within the group. Photographs should be provided to the PNOK, if desired.
5. The headstone or headstones should be inscribed with the names of all known deceased personnel.

SUMMARY

The Decedent Affairs Program consists of the search, recovery, identification, care, and disposition of remains of deceased personnel for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible. Large medical treatment facilities normally manage decedent affairs matters. However, when a death occurs at small independent operational units, senior Hospital Corpsmen will be responsible for the proper management of this program. For this reason, basic components of the Decedent Affairs Program were covered in this chapter. For further guidance, you should consult the *Decedent Affairs Manual* or contact the Naval office of Medical/Dental Affairs, Mortuary Affairs Section, Great Lakes, Illinois.

